



श्री माईबाबा [शिर्डी]
Shri Sai Baba - Shirdi.

Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi

A Glimpse of Indian Spirituality

(VIII Edition)

BY

Rao Bahadur M. W. PRADHAN, J.P.,

Ex Member of the Legislative Council

Bombay Government

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THE SAI BABA SANSTHAN, SHIRDI.

- (1) Books available at Receiver, Shirdi Sansthan of Shri Sai Baba,
Post Shirdi, Dist. Ahmednagar
- (2) Bombay Office Sai Niketan, 804 B, Dr. Ambedkar Road,
Dadar, Bombay-100 014

Price Rs. 2-00

Printed by Laxmibai Narayan Chaudhari at the
Nirnayasagar Press, 45, DE, Off Tokars Jivraj Road, Sewree, Bombay 15
Published by Shri K. S. Pathak, Court Receiver,
Shree Sai Baba Sansthan, Shirdi



To

Para Brah̄ma Mūrti Parāmatmā

Satchit-Ānand

SHRI SAI BABA

This

Eighth Edition

is

*By His Gracious Order
most devoutly and humbly*

Dedicated

As a token of the Author's absolute Surrender.

To

The Hon. Sir John William Fisher
Beaumont, K^T., K C., M A (CANTAB).
Chief Justice of H. M.'s High Court of
Judicature at Bombay

THIS WORK

IS

as an humble tribute to His Lordship's sound legal
attainments and unfailing devotion
to his judicial duties

As Well as

to His Lordship's broad and sympathetic outlook, uniformly affable
deportment, and cosmopolitan spirit

By kind permission most respectfully dedicated.

Author

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INTRODUCTION TO FIRST EDITION

My dear Babasaheb Turkhud,

I am very glad to learn that you wish to publish an English rendering of the Marathi memo left by our late lamented friend Kakasaheb Dixit about our Sadguru Sai Maharaj of Shirdi, who to my mind represented perfection so far as it can possibly be conceived by an imperfect being like myself. No praise that I can bestow is too high for him, nay, I am afraid I cannot say anything that will really come up to the mark. I count it as the greatest piece of good fortune that circumstances led me to his feet, and the moment I approached them as humbly as I could, all the load of my worldly cares disappeared though only a few minutes before it was felt to be exceedingly oppressive and such as to excite disgust of life.

This is not only my experience but of tens of thousands of others whom I met there during a rather prolonged stay. Among them were many highly educated gentlemen and ladies, a large number of hard-headed businessmen, many who had renounced the world and led a life of devotion and piety. The whole of the countryside worshipped him and gathered round with the instinct with which ants surround a big lump of sugar. While many came long distances at great expense and trouble each went away satisfied and anxious to repeat his or her visit as often as it could be managed. It was a sight to see and enjoy.

The wonder of wonders is that, of the personage so universally admired and worshipped, not even a single human being knew the real name. He dropped into the village so to say from the blue, helped a person to find his lost horse and took up his residence there for a whole lifetime, helping everybody that came along without any distinction, securing the love and reverence of all without exception. He appeared to know the innermost thoughts of everybody, relieved their wants, and carried comfort to all. He fulfilled my idea of God on earth.

It appears to me that the idea that you have conceived of publishing something about him, comes really from higher regions India and, for the matter of that, our whole planet of the earth.

appears to be approaching a characteristically catastrophic period, when changes, of which we can form no idea, are likely to be brought about as in the twinkling of an eye, and so help mankind through it, influences, other than material, appear to be necessary, and Kind Providence is providing them beforehand. At present man trusts too much to what we call reason and appears to forget, that, as instinct in living animals, so intuition in human beings has a place in his composition. To fulfil the purpose of his existence, he must cultivate both with humility and not pride, and should aim not at worldly wealth and power, but knowledge and identification with all. God of Nature has hitherto accomplished tremendously great things with small and obscure beginnings, and this may be of one of them. Sai Maharaj always impressed me as one who believed all religions to be true and helpful to those born to them, in their further evolution. So he insisted on each following his own ritual, without interfering with that of another. The basic virtues are one and the same everywhere, and due abstention and constantly wakeful discrimination supply the necessary impetus to further progress. Your humble publication may under Providence, in its own way, contribute to the desired result. So I heartily welcome it and wish it all success.

Amraoti,
8th January 1933

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With kindest regards
I am,
Yours sincerely,
Sd/- G S KHAPARDE

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2nd EDITION

Ever since the beginning of 1933, when the first edition of this book was published, devotees from all over India have been, as before, continuously going to Shirdi, more especially from Southern India. This attraction of South India to Shirdi, has

completely exhausted the stock of books of the first Edition. Therefore, the Shirdi Sansthan Committee has, per force, to go in for the second Edition, during the present war time, as the demand for the book is very keen. During the last ten years, Sai Baba's omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience are being unabatingly realised and experienced as before, by thousands of devotees, who concentrate on Sai Baba with love and devotion, whether they be in Shirdi or thousands of miles away in their own abodes. To broadcast all the experiences and the inner joy of such countless people individually is physically impossible. However, the real facts about Sai Baba's divinity, contained in the first edition, were spread far more extensively by the devotional propaganda of Mr B V Narsimha-swami, who, by his innumerable publications about Sai Baba's divinity in English, Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit, Canarese, Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati and Bengali, and by his personal tours throughout the length and breadth of India, has been carrying the knowledge of the peculiar Avatar of Sai Baba of all the classes and creeds of India.

Similar propaganda is carried on also by Mr J N Bose, M A A C W A (Lond) and Master Himadri Bose, his 11 years old son in Calcutta and his friend Mr S P R Naidu at Matunga, Bombay.

Messrs B A Chowgule and B V Manjeshwar (at present sub-judges in Ahmednager district) have been devotionally spreading the divinity of Sai Baba wherever they go.

Another significant feature in the worship of Sai Baba as a deity is the appearance of several Temples, Muths and Bhajan Melas, established for and wide throughout the country, not only in South India, the suburbs of Bombay and further north e g at Bhivpuri, but also in Calcutta.

The South India people have donated to the Sansthan, through Mr Durgia Naidu, a building plot and some funds for the construction of more housing accommodation—an undertaking made very prohibitive by war conditions at present,

The above phenomena have very considerably added to the work of the Shirdi Sansthan Committee, not only as regards correspondence &c. but more especially with regard to the housing and catering of devotees, who being inspired by their devotion, rush from thousands of miles away to Shirdi throughout the 24 hours of the day. Most of these devotees come as a rule inadequately provided even with the bare necessities of life. To meet the wants of such devotees, the Sansthan Committee has been making strenuous efforts to the best of its ability.

To provide for more accommodation eight more rooms have since been constructed in the Navalkar Wada and the late Mr. Dikshit's Wada has been renovated and more building site has been purchased by the Sansthan. Two more water-wells have been dug to provide for adequate water supply. The credit for these improvements, to a certain extent, goes to the ex-Hon. Secretary Mr. S. N. Kharkar.

In order to facilitate the working of the Sansthan, the Sansthan Committee consolidated the Sansthan Rules in a separate pamphlet published on 1-10-1941.

As the preamble in the said rules might be of some interest to the new devotees of Sai Baba the same is appended to this volume.

The present war times, as said before, are unfortunately a very great hindrance to undertake any further improvements e. g. construction of more housing accommodation and to maintain a provision of various kinds of victuals, which a diversity of devotees may desire.

The Sansthan Committee, therefore, sincerely prays, that Sai Baba should very soon restore the normal times of peace and tranquility and thus enable it to administer to the reasonable wants of the devotees of Sai Baba, especially during their stay in Shirdi.

Sai Pradhan Baug,
Santa Cruz,
9th October 1943.

Moreswar W. Pradhan

P R E F A C E

"A bow to those good Souls, who enjoy the deep bliss of self. They shower down the water of Self-bliss in order to refresh and cool those troubled souls who are burnt by the heat of this worldly existence. They are ornaments to "Chaitanya" (चैतन्य) They adorn the Science of the knowledge of Brahman and they are the charming mansions where the Eternal God dwells. They do not expect from the people who come to them, the acquisition of the prescribed Sadhanas (साधने) nor do they expect from them any proficiency in the Shastras. If people have only faith, they manifest the Light to them."

—EKANATHI BHAGAWAT.
(Translated from the original Marathi)

It gives me a great pleasure to edit the Second edition of "Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi" written by Rao Bahadur M. W. Pradhan, which gives a short sketch of the life and teachings of Shree Sai Baba of Shirdi-a great saint of Maharashtra during the early period of the 20th century. If biography of Saints is difficult, that of Shree Sai Baba is attended with difficulties almost insuperable. A cloud of mystery hangs over all the affairs of His life and completely veils off His birth, parentage and early life. None knows definitely anything about that period. In spite of such difficulties Rao Bahadur Pradhan has made a successful attempt in giving a short but a vivid account of Shree Sai Baba's life, which has become very useful especially to those who had no occasion to see Him personally and for this the Shirdi Sansthan Commtee is greatly indebted to the Rao Bahadur. In this edition the Author has naturally surveyed the main incidents regarding the Shirdi Sansthan during the last 10 years.

2. *Other features of this Saint that struck even casual observers were his unaccountable and marvellous knowledge of things and events far removed from Him in the sense of time and space, and a remarkable power to foretell coming events or to force events to come to pass in accordance with His supreme will. Visitors noted with devout admiration that he was frequently mentioning either expressly or by allusion their innermost secret thoughts, their remote past, of which they had lost all memory and incidents that occurred hundreds of miles away from his residence which none could possibly have communicated to him. Such miracles are seen to happen at the desire of great Saints. Some Vedantis (वेदांती) think that all miracles are brought about by the use of Siddhis (सिद्धी) and the Siddhis (सिद्धी) being obstacles on the path of self-knowledge, they express their disapprobation regarding such Siddhis (सिद्धी) and to some extent are even afraid of them. It is no doubt true that Siddhis (सिद्धी) are obstacles on the spiritual path, but we must distinguish between different kinds of Siddhis (सिद्धी). The Siddhis (सिद्धी) acquired by the practice of Hatha Yoga (हठयोग) by Changdeva (चांगदेव) are quite different from the Atma-Siddhis (आत्मसिद्धी) of Shree Dnyandeva (श्रीज्ञानदेव). The miracles happened at the desire of Shree Sai Baba were the Siddhis (सिद्धी) of the luttr sort. By such divine powers many persons were first attracted to Shree Sai Baba to secure only temporal gains but ultimately He made His devotees aspire to secure spiritual happiness and attainment of self-realisation which is the real mission of Saints. Shree Sai Baba has fulfilled this mission to the entire satisfaction of many devotees who came to Him.*

3. *The ultimate goal of human life is to realise God within and become merged in Him. We may go further and say that this is the birth-right of every human being and in order to achieve this ideal the Sadhak (साधक) has to go and bow at the feet of a Sadguru (सद्गुरु) who is so called because he makes the*

disciple realise the "Sat vastu" (सत्वस्तु) i. e. the Everlasting Thing and makes him experience perfect calmness of mind by making him realize his own Self. Shree Sai Baba was, as said above, a real Sadguru at whose feet I had the great fortune to pass many days during my young age. Listening to his conversation which was very instructive and delightful and which has become a source of spiritual inspiration for me even now, it has also become a source of consolation and solution when I was thwarted with temporal as well as spiritual difficulties. I have to conclude this perface with a prayer that May this small book be a source of spiritual inspiration to those who read it and may Shree Sai Baba give perfect happiness, both temporal and spiritual, to all those who have a strong reliance on Him.

ShriSaiPrasad,
Turner Road, Bandra,
Bombay No. 20.
9th October, 1945.

SANT DASANUDAS,
सतदासानुदास
YESHWANT JANARDAN
GALVANKAR.

INTRODUCTION TO 8th EDITION

It gives me great pleasure to present the 8th Edition of this book to all Sai Bhaktas.

The very fact that the book has run into its 8th Edition is a testimony to its popularity. For lakhs of Bhaktas who visit Shirdi every year, this book gives in a nutshell the early history of Sai Baba and the background on which the Shirdi Sansthan was founded.

The Nirnaya Sagar Press have done an excellent job of printing it. They deserve our sincere thanks.

Shirdi, 22-7-1975

K. S. PATHAK,
Receiver, Shirdi Sansthan.

A FOREWORD

I feel pleasure in placing before the public this short sketch of the life and teachings of the late Divine Master. Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, by Rao Bahadur Moreshwar, Vishwanath Pradhan of Sai-Pradhan Baug, Santa-Cruz.

He has taken his standpoint by the translations of the various incidents in Sai Baba's life, as they have appeared in Shree Sai Leela—a Marathi Monthly Journal—written by the able pen of the late Hon'ble Mr. Hari Sitaram Dixit, an eminent solicitor of Bombay, and an equally eminent and sturdy devotee of Shri Sai Baba.

In a translation, it is always difficult to convey the exact meaning of a theme from one language into another; nevertheless it will be admitted that Rao Bahadur Pradhan had done his very best.

I trust, therefore, readers will kindly forgive me if I take the liberty to mention, from out of the numerous personal experiences, an incident or two as a foreword.

Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi was undoubtedly a great man—a superman—a man who had attained the realization of the All Pervading Self, according to the tenets and experiences of the highest Hindu thought.

His attainment was such, that gentlemen of the highest University attainments, men of unimpeachable social position as well as mental culture, and almost all the then leading men of Maharashtra, in Government service and without, great journalists like the late Mr. B. G. Tilak, Deputy

Collectors, eminent lawyers, advocates, solicitors, engineers, doctors and mathematicians, flocked to his feet for his blessings.

Some of the most orthodox Hindu Shastrees, Christians, Parsees and Mahomedan Moulvies, and even butchers from Bandra, vied with each other to pay their obeisance to him.

The place where he used to sit looked to all outward appearances as a tumbled down old ramshackle sort of a construction. But in that small oblong room, Sai Baba sat in the North-east corner. In front of him in the opposite corner was the sacred fire burning night and day (it is still kept burning by the Sansthan Committee). Next to this sacred Dhuni (fire) were earthenware pots filled with water for Baba to drink and perform abutions. The wall had a niche, in which were placed a number of earthenware chulims (clay pipes).

Next to Shri Sai Baba's place and on his right hand were a couple of grinding stones, where occasionally he used to grind corn and pulses, and in doing that he was assisted by the village women, as well as high caste Hindu and Mahomedan lady visitors who happened to be there, eagerly, and without the slightest feelings of caste, creed and untouchability.

There was also a sack of wheat and a sack of country tobacco. This tobacco was put in the earthen pipes and smoked, the pipe being offered to various devotees, smoked by them and passed on to and fro to Baba.

This went on practically at all the times the visitors came in his przsence and ever anon.

* At present a wooden shrine is there, with an oil painting of Shri Sai Baba by Mr. Shamrao R. V. Jayakar of Parle, which is worshipped by hundreds of visitors.

On the western wall was a sort of a niche as is observed in Mahomedan musjids.

Opposite to this niche in the central part of this room Shri Sai Baba partook of a little of the food, which he daily begged from certain houses in the village, and of the offerings made by visitors and others. These he mixed up and distributed himself to some of the devotees, amongst whom were high caste Hindus, Brahmins, Mahomedans and parsees.

It may safely be said that Shri Sai Baba by practical teaching showed the ordinary house-holder how to perform his domestic duties, grind corn, eat his food, entertain visitors at the time of taking meals, and worship the Lord according to his own tenets, in his own home in the most simple and unostentatious manner.

To the Agnihotri (Five worshipper), Hindu or Parsee, it was a sacred place, owing to the sacred fire kept burning there, and there Shri Sai Baba used to perform some observances, when no one was allowed to come up.

When a Mahomedan visitor came up to pay his respects with flowers and lump-sugar and coconuts, Fatia was uttered in which Baba joined. The flowers were hung up in the central niche mentioned above, the lump-sugar was partly distributed amongst all those present there as well as the village urchins outside and partly returned to the party as prasad or present. The cocoanuts were broken up and similarly distributed.

All the while the Hindu devotees sitting there witnessed this Fatia and partook of the lumps of sugar as well as pieces of cocoanuts with pleasure and joy.

The Hindus worshipped Shri Sai Baba with all the rituals as observed in the Hindu temples throughout India.



Dwarkamai (Musjid).



Platform in front of Nandadeep under the Neem Tree
where Baba used to sit.

Sandal paste was applied to Baba's forehead, chest, hands and feet. Kumkum with rice was similarly applied.

The toes of his feet were washed and the water was partaken as sacred Tirth (holy water).

The Arati was performed at noon with all the paraphernalia of worship as in a Hindu temple.

Bells were rung. Sacred lamp with its five lights was waved before him, cymbals clashed, the big drum sounded, the huge bell in the compound sent its deep notes for miles and miles around and hundreds of devotees recited in perfect unison the words of the Arati and the sacred Sanskrit hymns.

The Mahomedans present there enjoyed all this and freely partook of the offerings distributed by the Hindu Bhaktas.

This wonderful place was called Dwarka Mai by Shri Sai Baba, who was heard many a time to say that whoever stepped into this Dwarka Mai had his future assured.

It will thus be seen that this wonderful place, owing to the sacred Fire, was a temple to the most Orthodox Hindu and Parsee, and owing to the niche, it appeared as a musjid to the Mohamedan and to the Christian, owing to the sound of bells etc., a Church. So in this unique place all the principal creeds of the world were united and the common worship of the Universal God brought home to each and all in a unique and loving manner. Moreover, to the ordinary house-holder it was an object lesson for carrying on his daily worship alongside with his daily earthly duties and toleration for the views and rituals of all others, in a most vivid and unmistakable manner

It will be seen that Shri Sai Baba created such an atmosphere of universal tolerance, good will and unity, and proved by his practical example the oneness of the worship of the Divinity to all the various castes and

creeds that it may be said with pardonable pride that though the foundation of Universal tolerance was laid down by all the saints of India and more particularly by the saints of Maharashtra, so ably described by the late Hon'ble Mr. Ranade in his "Rise of the Maratha Power," it was Shri Sai Baba who brought it home to all in an emphatic and practical manner.

The Gujarati, the Bengali and the Madrasi mind is very devotional. The Maratha mind is more practical and requires positive proof as to the authority and capacity of the preacher of **The Great Truth. Manifestation of the Divinity in Man** is what the Maratha mind insists upon and when that is forthcoming and realized, it will at once bend before and worship such a person.

Thus even men of untouchable classes, like Chokhamela (a Mahar), Rohidas (a chamar), Sajan Kasai (a butcher) and a host of other untouchable saints are held in the highest esteem, and revered by one and all.

The manifestations of the Divine attainments of Shri Sai Baba, the realization of the Universal Self, insisted upon as the highest attainment of the Hindu thought, was patent to every one, high or low, the learned and the ignorant. men and women, to all the thousands and thousands of devotees and seekers after the Truth, who flocked to Shirdi for his benediction.

Their experiences have been various and have been published in the Sai-Leela, a Marathi Monthly Journal.

The western minds and thoughts and men and young women imbued with the present day teachings of West, with only a superficial aspect of life, are apt to utter in a hurried and thoughtless manner that Shri Sai Baba was a mere clairvoyant and a hypnotist.

That he was miles and miles above these misleading lowest rungs of ladder of Spirituality viz: clairvoyance and hypnosis, the loitering in whose rungs the highest Hindu Thought strictly enjoins to avoid and not be ensnared or entangled in, such a lapse being absolutely detrimental to the progress towards Self Realization, culminating in the Realization of the Universal Self.

The writer would therefore mention a couple of such incidents from his own personal experiences, for the reader to ponder upon.

A friend staying in Bandra was one day leaving his place in the morning to go to his office. Near the door of his block, his wife remembered that she had certain expenses to make and asked him for a rupee. He knew the necessity of this request and opening his purse discovered that he had no loose coin in it, but only currency notes. He told his wife that he would get these cashed in his office and in the evening on his return home he would pay her the rupee. to which she gave her assent.

On descending the staircase and coming upon the first landing, when fumbling for his handkerchief, he found a rupee in that pocket. As there was ample time for him to catch his train, his duty was to go to up to his flat and hand over that rupee to his wife. Instead of doing that, nonchalant as most husbands are everywhere, he went to his office and after getting the notes cashed, gave a rupee to his wife on his return home in the evening, and forgot all about it thereafter.

Some days passed since, when both of them happened to go to Shirdi. No sooner they made their obeisance than Baba said to the lady, "Mother, now-a-days one had become to untruthful, that though there was a rupee in his pocket he would say there was none!"

Now the lady not knowing anything about the matter remained unperturbed, whereas the man, remembering the whole incident, threw himself at Baba's feet, and embracing them, shed tears of repentance and joy.

Repentance for his callousness in not having gone up and paid that rupee to his loving and trusting wife, joy for the feeling of assurance of Shri Sai Baba's watch on the guidance and progress of their worldly affairs.

Now as the man had completely forgotten this incident, could it be said that this was a case of mere clairvoyance?

Now as regards hypnosis:—Owing to the May vacation for schools, the youngest son of the above mentioned friend thought of spending his holidays at Shirdi, his mother accompanying him.

They were to have left on a Friday evening; but as this day approached and my friend found that they had made no preparations, he asked them the reason for the delay. They kept silent, at which the man felt puzzled. After repeated queries the mother said that the boy had given up the idea of going to Shirdi as there was no one at home to attend to the worship of the Shrine of Shri Sai Baba in their home at Bandra. Upon which my friend told them not to be anxious as he himself would perform the worship exactly as the boy was doing. This they would not believe, as my friend, having the views of the Prarthana Samajist, had never performed the worship of the Ideal (misnamed Idolatory) according to the regular formal outward Hindu technique, and only believed him, when he took an oath about it before the Shri's picture in the Shrine. They accordingly left for Shirdi that Friday night.

My friend was connected with a factory in Bombay and had to leave early in order to be present at the factory when the gates were swung open for the workmen to enter.

Next day was a Saturday. My friend got up a little earlier, took his bath and before proceeding with the pooja, prostrated himself before the Shrine and said "Baba! I am going to perform the pooja exactly as my son has been doing, but please let it not be a mere matter of drill."

So saying, he performed the pooja and laid before the Master a few pieces of lump-sugar as naivedya (offering). This sugar was distributed when he returned home in the noon for his lunch.

After performing the pooja he felt a great deal of mental and physical exhilaration. He then locked the door and left for his work. The servant came to the place later, and after opening the door with a duplicate key and sweeping the place, attended to the cooking of the food and waited till his return from the factory, when the food was served and the offering aforesaid of the morning pooja was distributed as the **prasad** or present.

Having more time to spare, the evening pooja was Performed with greater satisfaction.

The next day was a Sunday, a holiday, and passed away with pleasure.

The following day, Monday, was a working day and by evening my friend who had never performed pooja like this in all his life, felt great confidence within himself that everything was passing quite satisfactorily according to the promise given to his son.

Next day, Tuesday, he performed the morning pooja as usual and left for his work. Coming home at noon time, the food was served and he was just about to partake of it, when he saw that there was no **prasad** (present).

He asked the servant, who told him that there was no offering made that morning and that my friend had completely forgotten to perform that part of the pooja. At this my friend left his seat prostrating himself before the Shrine and expressed his regret, at the same time chiding Baba for his want of guidance in making the whole affair a matter of mere drill.

Then he wrote a letter to his son stating the facts and requested his son to lay it before Baba's feet and to ask Baba's forgiveness for his own remissness.

This happened in Bandra at about noon on this Tuesday.

At about the same time, when the noon arati in Shirdi was just about to commence, Baba spoke to my friend's wife, "Mother! I had been to your place with a view to having something to eat. I found the door locked. But there was a little window pane broken, through which I got in, and found to my great regret that **Bhau** (meaning brother—that is my friend) had left nothing for me to eat, so I have returned uncomfortable with severe cravings of unappeared hunger."

The lady did not understand it, but the son who was sitting close by, understood that there was something wrong with the pooja in Bandra and therefore requested Baba's leave to be allowed to return.

As Baba would not give him such permission he wrote a letter stating all that took place there and implored his father not to neglect the pooja.

Both these letters crossed each other on their journey and were delivered to the respective parties the next day.

Is this a case of **hypnosis**?

Sceptics will naturally make light of these experiences. Having graduated in Science the writer was a sceptic himself and can well understand the working of the minds of people in the same position as he was in, till he had the great and good fortune of sitting at the feet of this wonderful Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi in 1910.

The writer has had numerous unique experiences which have appeared in Marathi in the Sai Leela Monthly. These as well as the experiences of various other people, I dare say, may appear in English print sometime hereafter.

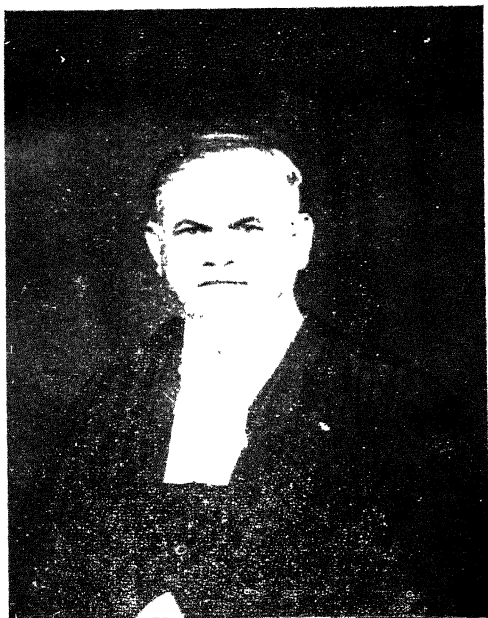
BANDRA, }
1st January 1933. }

R. A. TURKHUDD.

A SKETCH
OF THE
Life of Teachings
OF
Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi

On the 24th of September 1931, when a leaderette appeared in the Times of India on "Baba Jan," the then departed lady saint of Poona, a reference had been made in that lucid and learned leaderette to the late well known Saint Sai Baba of Shirdi. On reading the same, most of Shri Sai Baba's devotees, with a very close contact with the saint for over a decade, were sorely disappointed to find that most of the significant facts of Sai Baba's life, long career and teachings had remained unknown to (and inspired and propagandist publications had impressed) some of the responsible leaders of public opinion in India. Such devotees, therefore, considered it their sacred duty to suggest that the true history of Sai Baba, as had been observed by eye-witness in continuous touch with Sai Baba, and as jotted down by them, especially by the late Hari Sitaram Dikshit (of revered memory as one of the well known devotees of Sai Baba), should be translated into English for the benefit of the vast mass of English knowing people in the world.

Messrs. R. A. Turkhud and B. V. Deo (well known devotees of Shri Sai Baba) desired me to undertake this job which appeared to me to be very onerous. I had, therefore, to pluck up courage and I have tried to discharge this pleasant duty to the best of my humble abilities.



Rao Bahadur_ Moreswar W. Pradhan, P. J.,
B A , LL. B., Advocate (O s.), Author.



Shri Hari Sitaram alias Kakasaheb
Dikshit.

Of course, instances of spiritual and physical miracles performed by Shri Sai Baba are too numerous to mention. A few of them have been sung by the late Mr. G. R. alias. Annasaheb Dabholkar, First Class Resident Magistrate of Bandra, in his learned "Sai Sat Charitra"¹, which is a fitting supplement to Das Ganoo Maharaja's narration of Sai Baba's earlier miracles through some of his famous publications e.g. Bhaktaliamrut and Santakathamrut, etc.

I have therefore, tried to confine myself scrupulously to those instances jotted down by the late Hari Sitaram Dikshit, in his short sketch (in Marathi) of Shri Sai Baba (vide Sai Leela Vol. I).

Just as the taste of the pudding is in the eating of it, so whether Shirdi (containing as it does the very sanctified and sacred remains of Sai Baba, with its inexhaustible supply of "Udi" i.e. ashes from the sacred fire of "Dhuni", which is ever kept burning in the Dwarkamai, and which "Udi" has unchangingly continued to work the same miracles as it used to do in the life time of Sai Baba) is one of the important places of pilgrimage can only be realised by a personal visit to the Shrine of Sai Baba in the humble yet sacred village of Shirdi, on the Manmad-Ahmednagar Trunk Road, about eleven miles away from the Kopargaon Railway Station and eight miles from the town of Kopargaon on the bank of the sacred river Godavari.

SHRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM

Shri Sainath (alias Sai Baba) Maharaj, the saint of world fame, first appeared in Shirdi as a very handsome lad of sixteen about the year 1872 A. D. Shirdi is a small

1. A large volume of 53 Chapters in beautiful Marathi Verse, describing the various miraculous occurrences duly verified, seen at the feet of Shri Sai Baba.

village abutting on the Agra Trunk Road, in the Kopargaon Taluka in the Ahmednagar District. Upto now there is no reliable information about the place, birth and parentage of Shri Sai Baba. This much is certain that Sai Baba was very familiar with several places in the Nizam's territory. In his talks he several times used to mention Shelu, Jalna, Manvad, Pathri, Parbhani, Nowrangabad (Aurangabad), Beed, Bedar—all Moglai places. Once a man from Pathri had come to take Baba's darshan. Baba's enquires made from this man about the Pathri village and several of its well known residents showed that he knew the place very intimately; but this alone does not warrant that Pathri was Baba's birth place.

So also whether Baba was born a Brahmin or a Musalman cannot be authoritatively stated.

Once Baba said to the late Hari Sitaram Dikshit (well known in Bombay as Bhausahab Dikshit and in Shirdi as Kakasaheb Dikshit) that after Baba left his body, Baba would return as a lad of eight years (i.e. exactly as Lord Shri Krishna had done). Many devotees of Baba believed him to be an incarnation, and not as an evolved saint, and all this belief of theirs was based on their own personal observation of what Baba spoke and did. Although Sai Baba at times used to please himself by uttering "Yade Haqq" (i.e. I always remember God) and avoided the expression "Anal Haqq" (i.e. I am God), still innumerable cases have been recorded where Baba's thousands of devotees have realised the omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence of Shri Sai Baba.

Shri Sai Baba came to Shirdi along with a marriage procession of a relation of one Chandbhai, the patil of the village of Dhoopkhede.

Prior to this, one of the said Chandbhai's horses had strayed into the jungle and could not be traced for a long

time. On a lookout for his missing horse, Chandbhai while wandering in the jungle, sighted Sai Baba sitting under a tree. He had never seen Baba before. Sai Baba called him, saying "go after smoking chilum."¹ Chandbhai said that he was in search of his missing horse and could not afford to thus loiter on his way. Sai Baba told him not to worry, and that this horse would be found grazing on the other side of a hedge further on. At this, Chandbhai hastened to that spot, and, to his great astonishment, found his valuable and beloved missing horse grazing exactly as stated by Sai Baba. Chandbhai was a devout and God-fearing person, and promptly presented himself before Sai Baba with his horse, in a suppliant mood and expressing his desire to partake of the chilum. But there was no fire for lighting the chilum, nor water for moistening the chilum cloth. Sai Baba, by a stroke of a pair of pincers at one place, produced the fire and by another stroke nearby, water came out and thus this enviable jungle chilum party convinced Chandbhai that Sai Baba was certainly a Being of a very high order, and therefore requested him to go with him (Chandbhai) to his house. Sai Baba told Chandbhai that he would come the following day and did accordingly. After a few days' stay at Chandbhai's to the greatest good luck of the people of Shirdi, Sai Baba came to Shirdi with the said marriage procession, which camped in a field near Khandoba's temple on the outskirts of the village. One Mhalsapati, a goldsmith by caste, of Shirdi was a devotee of Shri Khandoba and visited that temple daily. There when this Mhalapati first saw Sai Baba, the former spontaneously accosted him, saying "Welcome Sai Baba" and this is the name i.e. "Sai Baba" by which thereafter this saint of saints became known to the world. Some time after coming to Shirdi, when Sai Baba happened to be examined on commission in a case, in answering the question as to what his name was,

1 The Indian clay smoking pipe.

Sai Baba said "I am called Sai Baba." Mhalsapati brought Sai Baba inside the village and there introduced him (Baba) to his (Mhalsapati's) friends, Kashiram Shimpi and Appa Jagle. These three Shirdi folks (i.e. Mhalsapati, Kashiram and Appa Jagle) were in the habit of welcoming, according to their means, whoever came to their village, especially people who had renounced the world or were of an ascetic nature.

After the marriage, the marriage procession went back, but Sai Baba chose to remain in Shirdi to the great joy of the above trio, who eventually became Sai Baba's devout worshippers. Both Kashiram and Appa died after some years on Ekadashi¹ days, thus giving proof of their devotion to Shri Sai Baba. Kashiram worshipped Sai Baba with his "Tan" (body), "Man" (Mind) and "Dhan" (his Wealth). Sai Baba used to wear a white or orange coloured "Kafani"², but Kashiram had prepared a green Kafani and cap for Sai Baba. But later on Sai Baba wore a white Kafani and a folded piece of white cloth on his head. Kashiram used to provide tobacco for chilum and fire wood for the "Dhuni"³ and also to give Baba some money. Later on he placed every month all his cash before Sai Baba requesting the latter to take as much he liked. At that time Sai Baba never took any money from anybody as **dakshina**: still from Kashiram he used to take a pice or two always. Kashiram had become so much attached to Sai Baba that he always prayed that Sai Baba should take money from him. If on any occasion Sai Baba refused to take anything from Kashiram, he was grieved and shed tears. That this mentality was a kind of egoism and a hindrance to the realisation of one's Self has been taught by Sai Baba to hundreds of his later devotees, by bringing home to them

1. 11th day of the lunar month. always considered a sacred day.

2. Long robe,

3. The sacred fire burning before an ascetic.

that nobody was rich enough to give whatever **dakshina** Sai Baba would ask for, and so it eventually happened to Kashiram, who later on could not pay what Sai Baba asked for, as his financial state became poorer and poorer, and then he fully realised that it was mere vanity on his part to think, that he could pay anything that Sai Baba would demand. After such conviction, Kashiram's financial condition gradually improved and he became happy, but never again panted as before to pay whatever Sai baba would demand.

Kashiram was a trader in cloth and so visited several villages on bazaar days. Once while returning from Nawoor bazaar, he was waylaid by dacoits. Kashiram was on horseback and the dacoits did not go for him at first, but waylaid the carts that were going along with him; and when they saw Kashiram, they ran towards him and began to ransack him. Kashiram surrendered everything except a small bundle which the robbers thought contained money. As a matter of fact it contained powdered sugar. A saint Janakidas Baba had advised Kashiram to put such sugar before ants, and so Kashiram always carried a packet of sugar with him, and considered it a great treasure; and come what may, he would never let this packet go. In the struggle, Kashiram saw a sword nearby dropped by one of the robbers. Kashiram got hold of this sword and killed two of the robbers outright; but a third robber gave a blow with an axe on the head of Kashiram who fell down in a pool of blood almost dead. The remaining robbers took Kashiram for dead and left him there. After a time, Kashiram regained consciousness and recovered after some days. As he had complete faith in Sai Baba as God incarnate, he declined to be removed to the hospital but urged the people to carry him straight to Shirdi. At Shirdi, Sai Baba asked Madhavrao Deshpande to attend on him and Kashiram recovered with the treatment ordered by Sai Baba.

The Government of Bombay rewarded Kashiram with a sword for this valour against the dacoits. While Kashiram had been struggling with the dacoits, Sai Baba in Shirdi was vociferating and abusing in anger looking towards the direction of Kashiram. The devotees nearby at once felt that some devotee of Sai Baba must be in grave danger, and all this anger and fighting mood was meant to fight against and avert the danger of his devotee, a phenomenon which ultimately appeared to be too true. There were many armed robbers against Kashiram and it was a miracle, pure and simple, that Kashiram was able to defy them and escape from the jaws of death. But, as it is said, the killer is always helpless before the Saviour. Kashiram lived after this for some years and died in Shaka 1830* on Chaitra** Prati-pada Day.

This incident at the start, which is only one out of hundreds if not thousands that happened later on, is a convincing proof of what Sai Baba really was; and

1stly. It proves that Sai Baba was completely merged in the Atman pervading the entire Universe, and therefore could at once know what was happening everywhere in the entire Universe.

2ndly. He had the power to so arrange the struggle that Kashiram could slay two robbers; that the axe blow on the head could not entirely kill Kashiram; that the robbers could be deluded to take him for dead and that within such a long period intervening between Kashiram's bleeding and his arrival at Shirdi, haemorrhage or, later, tetanus would not put an end to Kashiram's life—miracles, which only the one in Tune with the Infinite could perform.

* About 24 years ago.

** First month of Hindu Shaka Calendar.

One of the above trio in Shirdi, Mhalsapati, lived till the year 1922.

Mhalsapati was admirably attached to Sai Baba and therefore was very intimate with him. Sai Baba used to sleep one day in the masjid (called at Sai Baba's own desire Dwarkamai) and the next day in the Chavdi.¹ When Sai Baba slept in this Dwarkamai, Mhalsapati was with Sai Baba throughout the night and they both had a tete a tete off and on, and what was Pendya to Shrikrishna, this Mhalsapati was to Sai Baba. Till the end of his life, Mhalsapati sat up throughout the night in the Dwarkamai even after Sai Baba's Samadhi, on every alternate day. In fact this Mhalsapati was an emblem of poverty, viveka², vairagya³ and contentment.

Since the time Sai Baba came to Shirdi, he used to stay in the masjid which, at that time, had been in a very dilapidated condition. At day time, he moved about, but always returned to the masjid at night. If anybody invited him for dinner, he went, and treated and gave medicine to the people, but never accepted any money for the same; not only that, but he personally nursed the patients, and there are still living some who had the good luck of being nursed by Sai Baba. Later on Baba stopped giving medicine and only continued to give his "Udi" (ashes out of the fire which was constantly kept burning in the Dwarkamai, and this "Dhuni" has been similarly maintained by the Shirdi Sansthan Committee upto this date).

That Sai Baba gave medicine to the people was told by Sai Baba himself to the late Hari Sitaram Dikshit. He addressed Dikshit by the name Kaka⁴. Sai Baba said, "Kaka, formerly I used to give medicine to the people. Later I gave

1. Villagers' place of meeting.

2. Deep thinking.

3. Unattachment of mind.

4. Uncle.

Sai Baba in suppliant postures, humbly requesting to be forgiven and condoned. Some of them, who had actually persecuted him, became terribly afraid, because they had thoroughly misunderstood Sai Baba who was kind and loving to friend and foe alike. He loved everyone of the village equally and whenever any danger or calamity threatened the village or any individual, Sai Baba gave timely warning and those who listened to his advice invariably realised the enormity of the danger and thus had miraculous escapes from them.

Although the entire village had come to put implicit faith in Sai Baba, still very few happened to be intimate with him. Owing to Sai Baba's serene yet austere looks, nobody dared take any undue liberty with him, and then very very few frequented the Dwarkamai. One Madhavrao Balwant Deshpande, who had been a school teacher in a school next to the masjid (Dwarkamai), began to frequent the masjid, there prepare the chillum and smoke the same in Sai Baba's company. This went on for some time and Madhavrao become attached to Sai Baba, so much so that gradually he left off everything and his only business in life was to serve the steadily growing stream of devotees that began to pour into Shirdi incessantly. All this service of Madhavrao was purely honorary. This Madhavrao was the living lexicon of Sai Baba of Shirdi, and, as such, a reliable guide for many a new comer to the shrine of Sai Baba in Shirdi. Madhavrao died in the year 1939.

As a rule Sai Baba never went out of Shirdi, but at times he went to one of his devotees by name Babasaheb Denge in the neighbouring village of Nimgaon the north and at times to the village of Rahata, three miles towards the south, to the house of Chandrabhan Shet Marwadi. After the death of Chandrabhan, Khushalchand Shet looked after the business of the shop. Sai Baba off and on invited

this Khushalchand, and when anybody from Rahata came to Sai Baba, he would invariably ask him whether he had met Khushalchand.

Nanasaheb Dengale, a brother of Babasaheb Dengale, lived in Jali Nimgaon. He had no son. As he did not get a son by his first wife, he married a second, but to no effect. Then Babasaheb Dengale sent him to Sai Baba whose benediction that he would get a son proved true; and thus Nanasaheb Dengale, who came into frequent contact with Government officials, always sang the song of Sai Baba's super-human powers to these officials. This induced Chidamber Keshav alias Annasaheb Gadgil, the Chitnis of the Collector, to take Sai Baba's darshan, and he did so with some others. Annasaheb Gadgil's faith in Sai Baba increased day by day and he became one of Baba's staunch devotees.

The masjid (Dwarkamai) in which Sai Baba sat and slept every alternate night had been in a very dilapidated condition. There was plenty of dust on the ground, which was being added to by the help of dust falling from the dry mud roof. Nanasaheb Dengale brought for Sai Baba a wooden plank for sleeping upon. Sai Baba, instead of keeping this plank on the floor and sleeping on it, tied the plank like a swing to the rafter of the masjid with old rags, and commenced to sleep on it. The rags were so worn out that it was a question whether they could hold the weight of the plank itself. But here again Sai Baba disclosed his 'Lila'¹ by enabling the withered rags to sustain the weight of the plank with himself sleeping on it. On the four corners of his plank Sai Baba lighted a lamp (panati) at each of the four corners. It was a sight courted by many observers

1. Spiritual feat.

to see how Sai Baba mounted this plank. But the fact is that although many kept watching the event, nobody ever noticed how and when Sai Baba mounted this plank. All that they could observe was Sai Baba about to mount the plank and Sai Baba asleep on the plank. This naturally attracted crowds of people, and careful observers were posted by relays for a number of days without effect. But as crowds began to increase to detect this unbelievable feat, Sai Baba, in order to get rid of the bother, one day broke the plank into pieces.

The desire which drew Nanasaheb Dengale to Sai Baba also inspired Gopalrao Gund, Revenue Circle Inspector of Kopergaon, who though he had three wives, had no son. He got a son by Sai Baba's benediction and naturally became attached to Sai Baba. At one time, he thought of rebuilding the dilapidated musjid and stored a sufficient heap of stones for the purpose. But Sai Baba refused him permission to rebuild the musjid, because that service was reserved for some future devotee. The stones collected by Gopalrao were, by the desire of Sai Baba, utilised in renovating the temple of "Shani God" and other temples of the village. Sai Baba was mindful of preserving all the places of worship in the village. He got rebuilt and extended the Maruti's temple and also took care of the Muslim 'Turbat' of the place. It is mentioned above that Sai Baba at times used to sit under a nim tree on the outskirts of the village. Sai Baba once said that there was a 'Turbat' of a Pir underneath that nim tree. People therefore dug up the ground there, and were surprised to discover that, that was so. On that day, Sai Baba was taken out in a procession accompanied by music and singing. As regards this "Turbat" Sai Baba once told Kakasaheb Dikshit that, that was the place of his ancestors, and that it would be conducive to the good of those that would burn incense there on every Thursday and Friday.

Once Gopalrao Gund thought that an annual fair (Urus¹) should be held in Shirdi in honour of Shri Sai Baba. He communicated his idea to Taty Patil, Dada Kote Patil, Madhavrao Deshpande etc. of the village who readily fell in with the view, and began to raise funds for the same. But the then Kulkarni of the place opposed the idea, with the result that an order from the Collector was issued disallowing the holding of the Fair. But Sai Baba had given his clear benediction for the holding of the Fair and, therefore, the protagonists of the Fair again applied to the Collector, who cancelled his first order and gave the permission. At the desire of Sai Baba that Fair was fixed for Ram Navami² day. It is being held every year on the Ram Navami day since that time uptill now.

Devotees from all over India steadily began to pour into Shirdi and three such Utsavas were celebrated in Shirdi during Sai Baba's time; 1st the Ramanavami Utsava, 2nd The Guru Purnima³ Utsava, 3rd the Gokul Ashtami⁴ Utsava, and to these was added the 4th Utsava (after Sai Baba's Samadhi on the Vijaya Dashmi or Dussera day in 1918), namely the Punya tithi⁵ Utsava on the annual Dussera Day. The Shri Shirdi Sansthan Committee of Sai Baba which has been entrusted with carrying out the scheme (for the maintenance of Shri Sai Baba Shirdi Sansthan) sanctioned by the District Court of Ahmednagar, has, after mutual

1. Celebration.

2. Birth-day of Shri Ram, the 7th incarnation of God Vishnu as per Hindu mythology. This takes place in the month of March or April.

3. Worship of the Spiritual Teacher. This day falls on the full moon in August.

4. Celebrations of the day following the birth of Lord Krishna.

5. The sacred day on which Sai Baba left his body.

deliberations inter se, entrusted the management of the Ramnavami Utsav to Hari Bhakta Parayan Das Ganoo Maharaj, the well known modern poet and kirtankar, who has been attending to it with great zeal and energy worthy of admiration.

The second ustava fell to the lot of the late Gopal Mukund alias Bapusaheb Buti, the well-known millionaire of Nagpur (C. P.) whose magnificent edifice of black stone costing over a lac of rupees is now the Samadhi Shrine of Shri Sai Baba. The sons of the late Bapusaheb Buti attended to this utsava till 1940, and since 1941 the Sansthan has been attending to this ustava. The sons of Bapusaheb are now contributing Rs. 100/- as part of the expenses.

The third utsava of Gukul Ashtami has been entrusted to the villagers of Shirdi headed by Tatyaji Ganapatrao Kote Patil, one of the ardent devotees of Sai Baba. The Shirdi people upto this day make it a point to make this utsava successful.

The last and the 4th utsava, the Punyatithi utsava, came to be entrusted to Sai Baba's devotees outside Shirdi, especially to those on the Bombay side; and upto this day this utsava has also been attended to with all possible zeal and devotion all round. Be it said in passing that the present Permanent Fund of the Sansthan has been started from the savings of the collections of spontaneous contributions for the first Bhandara on the 13th day after Sai Baba's Samadhi in 1918 A. D.

On account of the very scrupulous care bestowed on it from the very start by the late Kakasaheb Dikshit, the first Hon. Secretary, and the late Annasaheb Dabholkar, the first Hon. Treasurer, and continued by their successors

in office, the permanent fund is somehow able to meet the annual cost of the maintenance of the Sansthan and it is up to the devotees to see that this Fund is adequate to keep the steadily expanding Sansthan satisfactorily cared for.

Sai Lila, originally a monthly magazine containing, inter alia Sai Baba's "Lilas" as manifest from the countless experiences of the mass of devotees, was, at the start, so ably managed by the aforesaid two devotees, Messrs. Dixit and Dabholkar, that for some time it proved to be a gaining concern of the Sansthan. Later on, this publication, for manifold reasons, dwindled down to be a losing concern, so much so, that the Sansthan has to remain contented for the time being by making it a quarterly issue. It is at present managed by a sub-committee appointed for the same.

The nebulous legacy by a will in favour of the Shirdi Sansthan made by the late Damodar Ghanashyam alias Anna Chinchnikar of over three fourths of his estate, which had been entirely in the clutches of his creditors, would have had to be rejected with thanks as useless and gratuitous worry and bother to the Sansthan, but for the herculean efforts from the start of Mr. B. V. alias Balasaheb Deo, who, almost alone and unaided, has been devoting his vast personal influence in the locality (Chinchni in the Dahanu Taluka), his precious time and energy in converting almost a hopeless and losing concern into one which may eventually, after great and strenuous efforts, prove to be of benefit to the Sansthan to the tune of about Rs. 10,000 or so. Balasaheb Deo sincerely considers this work as the worship of Shri Sai Baba.

Now to revert to the Ramnavami utsava, the management of this utsava from the beginning was looked after by Tatyaji Ganpatrao Patil Kote. He was a great pet of Sai Baba whom Tatyaji used to call Mama i.e. uncle. Tatyaji's

mother, the late Baijabai, had rendered devout service to Sai Baba and that too at a time when most of the villagers considered Sai Baba as a mad man. Sai Baba went to the village for alms (Bhiksha) four or five times a day; but Baijabai would never send him away unserved. Of course, Baijabai herself did get the benefit of her aforesaid devotion, and also the whole of her family was thereby benefited and especially her son Tatya, who not only got money from Sai Baba, but was being fondled by Sai Baba in many ways, exactly as a nephew, a phenomenon which was noticed daily in the evening when Sai Baba and Tatya behaved as uncle and nephew respectively. Tatya looked after the management both of the masjid and chavdi. Sai Baba never arose for Chavdi until Tatya came and held him by the hand and made him get up. Tatya took Sai Baba by the hand, made the seat and then made Sai Baba sit on it and then prepared the chilum. This was the settled routine.

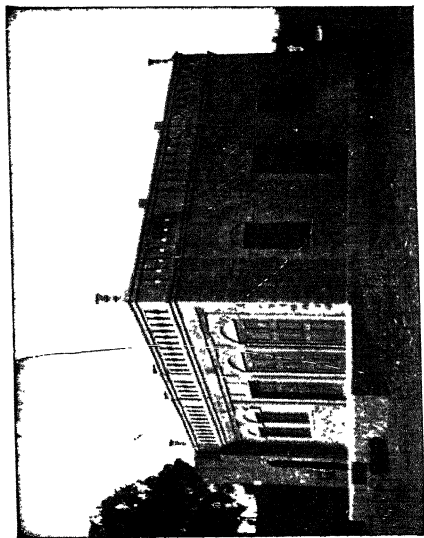
At the time of the Ramnavami fair i. e. on Ramnavami day itself, two huge flags were taken in gorgeous procession to the masjid where these were fastened at the two corner tops. One of them came from the late Shankarrao Raghunath Deshpande alias Nanasaheb Nimonkar and the other from Damushet Kasar of Nagar. Nimon is a village in Sangamner Taluka. Nanasaheb was an Hon. Magistrate and was considered as one of the leading men in the Taluka. He did Magistrate's work for many years, which he gave up on account of old age. He sometimes visited his uncle at Shirdi; and took Sai Baba's darshan at the desire of his uncle. Gradually Nanasaheb's faith in Sai Baba increased, so much so, that the last three years he spent in the service of Sai Baba incessantly day and night. He left Sai Baba only for his daily bath worship and food; during the rest of the time he dedicated himself to the service of Sai Baba. Although he was past 60 years, he never desired

for any rest away from Sai Baba, who called him by the name Kaka. He did not live long after Sai Baba. By Sai Baba's grace he had a calm end. He was no mindful of Baba that he saw Sai Baba everywhere. Whenever anyone approached him, Nanasaheb said, "Welcome, Sai Baba". To his wife he said the same, "Welcome, Sai Baba". At this, his wife thought that he was delirious or getting unconscious, and, therefore, replied to him that she was not Baba, but his wife. To this Nanasaheb replied, "Who is within you? Of course Baba; you are Sai Baba". In this way Nanasaheb remembered Sai Baba right upto his end.

The second bunting flag of Ramnavami came from the late Damodar Savlaram alias Damushet Kaser as said before. Although he had three wives, he had no son, and, therefore, he was very sad. Once Govindrao Sapkar, the father-in-law of Madhavrao Deshpande, suggested to him that he should go to Shirdi and get Shri Sai Baba's benediction. He did accordingly and got a son. This confirmed his faith in Sai Baba and, since then, he commenced to bring a flag on Ramnavami day and to feed the Fakirs there on that day. He has kept doing this upto this day.

A few years before Ramanavami Utsav was started Sai Baba had attracted to himself a devotee by name Narayan Govind alias Nanasaheb Chandorkar. He was a resident of Kalyan and at that time a Chitnis of the Collector of Ahmednagar. To him, one day, Keshav Anant alias Appa Kulkarni of Shirdi said that Sai Baba had called him. At first Nanasaheb did not believe Appa, and told him, "Why do you take Sai Baba's name? Tell me frankly what you want from me". At this when Appa assured Nanasaheb that the latter was really called by Sai Baba, Nanasaheb came to take Sai Baba's darshan and very soon became a staunch devotee of Sai Baba. He repeatedly visited Sai Baba and benefited himself by Baba's ambrosial

advice during their sittings which at times went on for hours together. At such sittings Nanasaheb was convinced about Shri Sai Baba's mastery over the Sanskrit language. Nanasaheb's devotion to Sai Baba was very great indeed. For two things Nanasaheb will be ever remembered by the other devotees of Sai Baba. The first is that he got rebuilt and extended the old dilapidated masjid. As he himself had no time, so Nanasaheb Nimonkar, at the former's request, undertook to supervise the work personally and carried it out excellently. Permission for starting the work was obtained from Sai Baba, through Mhalsapati. Although permission had been given, yet when the work was going on Sai Baba used to pull down the work and large heavy stones and other heavy building implements were hurled away by him from time to time. In this manner the work was pushed through. These acts of Sai Baba may appear strange to outsiders, but those who had been in closer touch with Sai Baba will feel convinced that Sai Baba never did anything without any good reason. At last the work of the masjid was completed and on the day it was so completed, as Sai Baba had gone to Nimgaon, he was brought from there in a procession with Music, Bands, etc. and ushered in state into the new masjid (Dwarkamai). In the construction of the new masjid, the three carpenter brothers Kondaji, Gabaji and Tukaram proved of the greatest use. And after the construction, the management of the masjid continued with these three brothers for many years. This Kondaji died afterwards and Gabaji and Tukaram are still living. Upto the end of Sai Baba's life, the sweeping of the masjid, the cleaning of Shri's utensils, the heating of water and serving the same for washing Shri's month etc., was done by Tukaram. Sai Baba as a rule would not allow these things to be done by anybody else. Upto now, the flag procession of Ramanavami day starts from the house of these carpenters.



Chavad p. 3



Shri Narayan Ganesh alias Nanasaheb
Chandorkar.

The second great thing which the late Nanasaheb Chandorkar did was the information he spread broadcast about the benevolent and marvellous deeds of Sai Baba and thereby gave the benefit of Sai Baba's benediction to people at large. After being a Chitnis, Nanasaheb was a Mamlatdar and then a District Deputy Collector and as such he had to tour through large areas. During such tours, wherever he went, he never failed to sing the songs, very devotionally, of Sai Baba and thus incited an urgent desire amongst his audience to take the benefit of Sai Baba's darshan. Nanasaheb was the cause of the benefit of the darshan to the late Kakasaheb Dikshit (Hon. Hari Sitaram Dixit. LL.B., J. P., Solicitor, Bombay) as also to thousands of persons from Bombay and the District. For attracting the attention of the Bombay people, besides Nanasaheb, two other persons also were instrumental. One of them is Hari Bhakta Parayan Ganesh Dattatraya Sahasrabuddhe alias Das Ganoo Maharaj. He was at first in the Police Department and was very fond of Tamasha.* Through Nanasaheb he came to take Sai Baba's darshan, and gradually became so much attached to Sai Baba that he left service, and by publishing his devotional books (Pothis) and through his public Kirtans** commenced to advertise far and wide the name, fame and spiritual worth of Sai Baba. This is Das Ganoo's career upto the present day—a career which has now elevated him so far, that he is one of the leading Kirtankar Varkaris† of Pandharpur, well-known for his entertaining histories of ancient saints and other works both in prose and poetry and is an avowed disciple of Sai Baba, who chants not only in Shirdi and Pandharpur, but also amongst the thousands of devotees of Shri Sai Baba. Modern Bhakta Lilamrut,

* Reciting popular songs of inferior kind.

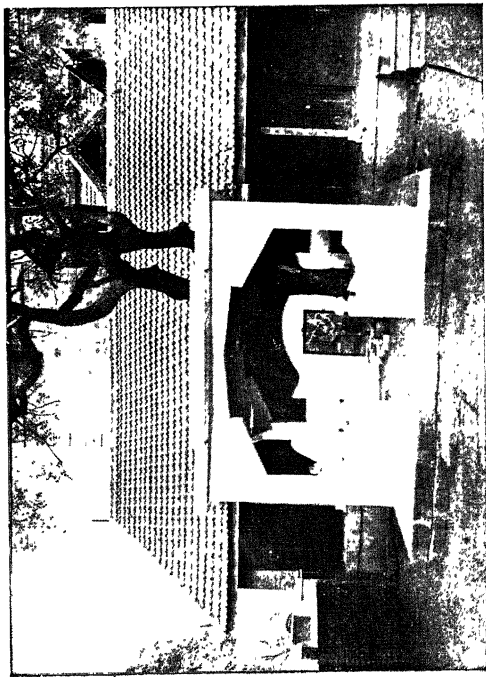
** Devotional musical preaching, highly superior and learned.

† Persons who visit Pandharpur to pay homage to God Vitthal there regularly, every year.

Santa Kathamrut, Bhaktisaramrut, his commentaries in poetry on Ishavasyopanishad and on the Amrutanubhava of Shri Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, and Shri Shankaracharya's Charitra in 1942 are among his principal productions. Nana-saheb brought Das Ganoo to Bombay and gave the large public of Bombay the benefit of Das Ganoo's inspiring and attractive Kirtans where the hearts of the audience were captured wholesale by listening to the saintly and miraculous fame of Sai Baba. This brought about an incessant stream of visitors to Shirdi from Bombay and the surrounding country far and wide, since the year 1910 A. D.

The other person was the late Kakasaheb Dixit (The Hon'ble Mr. Hari Sitaram Dixit) from whose sketch of Sai Baba in Marathi this sketch in English has been attempted. This Kakasaheb about this time i.e. 1910, began incessantly to stay in Shirdi at the feet of his Master, Sai Baba. He was thus out of the public life of Bombay and many of his friends and well-wishers, worldly as they were, published in the papers that Dixit had become a Buwa i.e. an ascetic and therefore many went to Shirdi to see who it was that caused such a change in Mr Dixit.

When the late Nanasaheb first came to Shirdi, there was no place for the visitors to stay in it. But this want was soon removed. The late Rao Bahadur Hari Vinayak Sathe was a Deputy Collector in this District. Since many years his first wife was dead, and he had no wish as he was over fifty years, to get re-married. But as he had no male issue, his friends were after him to get re-married. At last he decided that he would go to Shirdi and do as Sai Baba would advise. He came to Shirdi and Baba advised him to get married again and said he would get a son. The Rao Bahadur selected a girl and informed her father, the late Ganesh Damodar Kelkar, that the girl should be shown to Sai Baba. Accordingly when Kelkar brought the girl



Gurupadukasthan (Navalkar Wada)



Shri Ramkrishna Navalkar,
B.A.,LL.B., Advocate (O. S.)
(of Navalkar Wada).

to Sai Baba, the latter put a melon in her 'Oti' (lap) and applied kunkum to her head. Shortly after, the marriage took place. At the desire of Sai Baba, Rao Bahadur Sathe built a big wada* by purchasing lands surrounding the aforesaid Nim tree. This Wada, built by the late Rao Bahadur Sathe, had been purchased on 30-9-1924 by the late R. S. Navalkar, B.A., LL.B., Advocate, O. S., Bombay. Mr. V. N. Gorakshakar, who is now one of the five life-Trustees of the Sansthan, with great efforts, successfully induced the heirs of the late R. S. Navalkar to make a gift of the said Wada to the Shirdi Sansthan in 1939. On the said Wada, the Shirdi Sansthan, in 1941, built a structure containing four double rooms for the use of the devotees of Sai Baba as per Rules made there for. Three years later, Sai Baba got another Wada built by Kakasaheb Dikshit, thus providing for some accommodation for the devotees staying or made to stay in Shirdi, because it was not certain when Baba would allow a devotee to leave Shirdi. A few years later, Shrimant Gopalrao Mukund alias Bapusaheb Buti of Nagpur built, at Baba's instance, a third Wada. This is a black stone mansion the like of which may not be found in the whole of the taluka, costing over a lac of rupees. This contains Shri's Samadhi. This Bapusaheb Buti was a permanent resident of Shirdi ever since 1910 A. D. As it is over a quarter of a century since Buti's Wada was constructed it stands in need of extensive repairs to preserve the same from natural deterioration. It remains to be seen how Sai Baba is going to solve this problem of the Sansthan.

After the building of the first Wada, Shirdi began to get the appearance of a Sansthan. Sai Maharaj allowed his devotees to perform his "Arati" and all the paraphernalia of stately worship gradually began to come into evidence.

Building with one or more central open courtyards

The Chavdi was richly decorated with mirrors, hanging lamps, pictures etc., and the procession to the Chavdi assumed a very stately appearance with sweet music, bhajan, a horse and a palanquin, Chopdars etc., accompanying the procession. And nothing could surpass the manifest divinity in Sai Baba's expression, when he made a halt of about 5 minutes in front of the Chavdi looking towards the sky and making signs with his right hand before the procession entered the Chavdi. Indeed, a sight celestial for the worldly mortals to see! The doors of both the Musjid and Chavdi were covered with mosaic tiles etc., and the entire credit of all this splendour is wholly due to the late Sundrabai Kshirsagar alias Radhakrishna Bai. She was a devout devotee of Sai Baba, to whom she had dedicated her mind and efforts. As she had no money of her own, she made all efforts to import splendour into the Sansthan through such of the several rich devotees as could be influenced by her sweating services in token of her devotion to Sai Baba. She was a great organiser during her eight or nine year's stay in Shirdi, where she died at the age of 35. In the life-time of Sai Baba, she never spared herself to add worldly grandeur to the daily curriculum of a saint who, nevertheless, would not be distracted or deluded from the enjoyment of his own grandeur within himself by these outward shows. But whatever Radhakrishna did in nine years in transforming to rural aspect of Shirdi into an urban one, others would not be able to achieve in a quarter of a century. She was a woman of resolute will and assertive temperament. It was she who introduced the night Shej* Arati and the Kakad** Arati in Chavdi. By her death the Sansthan is deprived of a splendid caretaker of the Sansthan property.

* The devotional prayers before sleep.

** The devotional prayers before leaving bed in the morning, Morning Invocaion.

But as wonderful are the ways of Sai Baba, He has graced the Sansthan with another lady full of Vairagya and selflessness in the person of Mrs. Jankibai Tambe alias Shrimati Sai Mai (daughter of the late Purushottam Sakharam alias Balasaheb Bhate—a devout devotee of Sai Baba) who is admiringly filling up the gap created by the demise of Radhakrishna. This Sai Mai has dedicated all her moveable and immoveable property to the Sansthan by a deed of settlement dated 2-1-1943.

Not only this, but her office in the Sansthan as “Bhojan Sevika” she has been discharging with wonderful zeal, promptitude and care worthy of admiration. She has been often found to be doing her work unmindful of her own health, as she believes that the service of the Sansthan is the service of Sai Baba. So, inspite of all odds, the credit of the satisfactory management of the “Bhojan Griha”, which is exclusively meant for the benefit of the devotees of Sai Baba, goes to her. But for her strenuous efforts, it would not be possible for the Sansthan to maintain any “Bhojan Griha” at all. The Sansthan Committee, therefore, prays to Sai Baba to see that this Lady is duly assisted by all concerned in her aforesaid service of Sai Baba.

At first Sai Baba never allowed anybody to perform even his pooja (worship). The first pooja was allowed to be done by Mhalsapati. Then after some time Sitaramji Denge of Nimgaon came to perform pooja, and although Sai Baba got angry, he was allowed to finish it. Later on the younger son, Mahadeo alias Bapu, of Nanasaheb Chandorkar was complacently allowed to perform pooja and later on all were allowed to do it. But at that time Sai Baba would not allow anybody to perform Arati. After some time, the privilege of first performing the Arati was reserved for the late Laxman Krishnaji alias Tatyasaheb Nulkar. He was a sub-Judge at Pandharpur and, as he was ill, he

had taken leave and come to Shirdi; but his inner-most desire was to retire from service and spend the rest of his life at the feet of Shri,* and that was what happened, Nulkar being very devoutly attached to Sai Baba.

The services rendered by Radhakrishna were of various kinds. Daily she twice swept the passages in the Sansthan through which Sai Baba walked. Of course, she removed every kind of rubbish on those roads. Before her advent, this work was done by one Balaji Patil Nevaskar. He had come to Shirdi after renouncing the world and with complete resignation; many of his people had come to persuade him to go back to his place, but he declined. He always swept the roads and cleaned the masjid thoroughly and took Maharaja's darshan from a distance and never went near. He would drink only the tirth of Sai's feet or Sai's bath water or water left in the vessel after Sai Baba had partaken of it from the same. All his agricultural income he would place before Shri and would only take back whatever Shri gave him; of course, Shri returned almost the whole of it. After two years' stay, Balaji Patil was ordered by Sai Baba to go home and he went accordingly; still he came to Shirdi off and on and offered his entire income. He died some years later.

The daily routine of Sai Baba was very rigidly maintained by him. He got up very early and sat by the fire-place (Dhuni). After a while he finished answering nature's call and then he sat quietly for a while. In the meanwhile one Bhagoji Shinde came and, undoing the bandages wound round Sai's right hand, massaged the hands and the whole body. Then he prepared the Chilum and gave it to Sai Baba who smoked it and gave the same to Bhagoji for smoking. After the Chilum had passed from hand to hand five or six times.

* The Holy (meaning Sai Baba.)

Bhagoji left. This Bhagoji was an outright leper and still Sai Baba not only did not shun him but on the contrary associated himself with Bhagoji in a manner as if the latter was the healthiest person. After Bhagoji had gone Maharaj sat for a while, when a few selected persons came and did seva (i.e. massaged his feet etc.) Then Maharaj got up for washing his mouth and face. This was a sight worth seeing. Sai Baba put plenty of water on hands, feet, mouth, ears and cleaned all these parts of the body in a very delicate manner. The same process Baba followed at the time of his bath. After washing the mouth, Baba went out for Bhikhsha* to five fixed places and stood in each particular place to receive the chapatties or whatever other food was offered to him, but ate very little of it on returning to the masjid. After this chhota hajri Baba held a darbar at which most of the Bhaktas assembled, when Shri gave advice in the form of (by narrating) stories. At times during this darbar Baba purchased guavas, plantains, mangoes etc. and distributed the fruit among the Bhaktas, or served them with his own hands i.e. he peeled off the plantains, cut guavas into pieces with his hands, and softened mangoes by rolling them between both his palms. After this darbar Maharaj went to Lendi. The Lendi garden was purchased by Rao Bahadur Moreshwar W. Pradhan, J. P. etc., one of the first life-Trustees of the Sansthan, a few months before Sai Baba's Samadhi, and presented to the Shirdi Sansthan, when the same was formed and sanctioned by the District Court of Ahmednagar.

In this garden in the middle of the western side, touching the Agra Main Road, Sai Baba himself, with the manual help of his devotees, both rich and poor, dug and built a water-well. The water of this well became famous in the vicinity for driving away fevers &c. Rao Saheb Yeshwantrao

1. Begging for alms.

J. Galvankar, B.A., one of the five life-Trustees of the Sans-than, built in this garden, in January 1942, around Baba's Pimple tree—His place of daily visit—a quadrangular masonry stage or "Par", over which is now continued the "Nanda deep", this place therefore has now become an ideal one for making "Japa", "Tapa" & "Dhyana". At Lendi, Baba stayed for about an hour. After returning from Lendi, Baba remained in the musjid till 2 p.m. during which interval Baba allowed himself to be worshipped by various Bhaktas through individual pujas and a general Arati. Then Maharaj had lunch and again went to Lendi, and after about three quarters of an hour sat in the musjid till sunset when he went out a little and was again seated in the musjid. As a rule there were three general or common sittings or darbars during the day. First one in the morning after breakfast, second after Baba's return from Lendi, and the third at about 5 p.m. During all these sittings Baba gave general advice which was universal in character and which improved the characters of several devotees. The sum and substance of His advice was to have strong faith in God and patience for His Realisation; to love all creatures alike; not to wound the feelings of others; to be straightforward and honest in all our actions; not to take the services of others without due payments, etc. At times he gave advice through stories, which stories used to solve the different questions and anxieties of the different Bhaktas, without the Bhaktas having to utter a single word. What miraculous effect such a process of meeting the wishes of a large number of people used to have on each individual Bhakta can better be imagined than described. And there was such a unique way of narrating a story that sometimes one story used to create different impressions on the minds of different Bhaktas, and those for whom it was not meant would invariably not understand it or follow it, or miss it. But it would go straight home to those for whom it

was meant and restore calm and contentment within their ruffled and distracted minds. Just as Ramdas Swami wrote Dasabodh in Marathi for the salvation of ordinary Marathi-knowing man, so also Shri Sai Baba gave any advice in a language which his audience would easily understand. Nay, Sai Baba did not stop at giving mere wordy advice. Once a person entered his Musjid, whether he was good, bad or indifferent, Sai Baba made it his own concern to get that person gradually to the realisation of himself from within himself. And this Sai Baba did by subjecting that individual to several personal experiences, and off and on showing Sai Baba's hand in those experiences of the individual in a marvellous way, at times through the dreams of the individual himself, or of his friends or relations and so forth. And the Bhaktas of Sai Baba frankly admit that that was so not only in the life time of Sai Baba, but that it has been equally so even now after his Samadhi. This has been entirely borne out by the innumerable experiences of Bhaktas far and wide which they devoutly wish to be published in the Sai Lila for the edification of the rest of their brethern. Even the "Udi"¹ of Sai Baba has continued to work wonders upto the present day. That Sai Baba's "Dhuni" in the Dwarkamai at Shirdi has the same austerity and potentiality as before has been clearly indicated by Sai Baba to one of his Bhaktas a few months ago. It is no joke that a very serious illness or a hopeless case should be cured by the mere touch of the body of St. Francis Xavier every ten years. The same wonders are worked day and night incessantly by the sacred "Udi" of Shri Sai Baba, the saint of saints known in modern times. A very large proportion amongst the devotees of Sai Baba went to him for the fulfilment of their worldly desires. In working out the fulfilment of such desires Sai Baba

1. The ashess from the Sacred fire of the Dhuni in Dwarkamai.

invariably led such votaries to the realisation of the Self within, and there can be no doubt that the unmistakable projected Self out of the material body of Sai Baba was meant for the guidance, protection and salvation of humanity at large. That Sai Baba was a clear example of Existence—Knowledge—Bliss in body corporate has been convincingly proved by his lifelong acting, teaching and care-taking of the nonsiddha, some of the instances of which have been happily sung by the late Annasaheb¹ Dabholkar through his prasadic² Sai Satcharita.³ Those taking interest in the above brief sketch of Sai Baba's Lilas will do well to visit Shirdi once and see for themselves whether Sai Baba's Samadhi's darshan itself puts them on the right track of Self-realisation or not. "Man! know thyself," because many Bhaktas of Sai Baba are aware that he often used to say that even his "Turbat" (i.e. the place of his Samadhi) will speak. An instance of the Turbat speaking has lately appeared in the Sai Lila, the Sansthan's Monthly Magazine. Cases of personal experiences day after day are being brought to the notice of the Editor of this Magazine which is ever ready to publish the same; and, innumerable as they are, their total publication would be very voluminous indeed! But what matters is the lessons they contain and not their volume.

Once an astrologer, who had heard about Sai Baba as a Saint of a very high order, came to Shirdi with the avowed object of placing a complete Book on Astrology into the hands of and receiving back the same as prasad from Sai Baba, because the astrologer sincerely believed that such a "prasad" from Sai Baba would make him a very proficient

1. He was first class Resident Magistrate of Bandra for a number of years.

2. Illuminating.

3. A big volumine, in Marathi Poetry, stating the incidents and miracles of Sai Baba.

astrologer and thus enable him to make a fortune. But knowing as Sai Baba did the past, the present and the future of everything in this world, when implored to give that Book to the astrologer, gave the Book instead to Bapusaheb Buti (the well known multi-millionaire of C. P.) who was sitting close by. Now, this Bapusaheb was devoted to Sai Baba, not for asking for any wealth (which he had in plenty) nor for any worldly wish etc. Still Sai Baba thrust that Book into Bapusaheb's hand and said "Bapusaheb, take this". Of course Bapusaheb took it, and the Astrologer was disappointed. But what happened? Bapusaheb, who never cared to read anything, skipped over the book now and then only for a short time simply because Sai Baba had given the book to him and as he was taking some interest in Astrology as some pastime hobby. But after going through some of the pages of this book, Bapusaheb Buti became such a proficient Astrologer that he was carrying in his head the "Kundalis*" of several of the Bhaktas of Sai Baba and was able to say with precision, every day, what Bhakta would do what act during the course of that day. One of the innumerable instances of Bapusaheb Buti's precise foretelling is as under:--

There was some election meeting at a place. The election was to begin at 8 a.m. Bapusaheb told his friend, who was one of the six candidates contesting the election, that if the election was over before 8-30 a. m. there were no chances of success. If it dragged on till 9 a.m. the chances of success would be 50%. But should the election go on till 9-30 a.m., that friend would defeat all and win the election. Bapusaheb also assured his friend that with some efforts the latter would be able to drag on the election on some pretext or other till 9-30 a.m. and that he would come out successful.

* The disposition of the planets at the time of the birth of a person.

The friend attended the election, and found to his great astonishment that everything happened as predicted by Bapusaheb and came out successful in the manner foretold by Bapusaheb.

Now what does the above 'Lila' of Sai Baba teach ? It teaches:—

1. That Sai Baba knew that it was not the destiny of the Astrologer to be proficient in Astrology as he had aimed at.
2. That he wanted to show what any person who was the recipient of such a 'prasad' would be capable of.
3. That Sai Baba wanted to teach his "Bhaktas" that a person's proficiency in any art or science is utilised best when given gratis to humanity and not for any love of lucre.

And the above is an instance out of the innumerable which manifested Sai Baba's Omniscience and all-pervadingness.

A thoughtful reader going carefully through the above brief sketch of Sai Baba will naturally ask himself: "What have I learnt from the aforesaid sketch?"

1stly. He will find that Sai Baba every now and then gave evidence that sitting as he was within the four corners of the Musjid, he did know the past, the present and the future of all the world over.

2ndly. Appearing as he did to be in his human body at Shirdi, he was and still is every now and then making his entity felt by his devotees all the world over by working wonders, either through his "Udi" or by giving hints through dreams, or by promptly responding to the invocations of

his devotees from far distant places. In some instances hopeless cases of physical ailments were speedily and miraculously cured, and in others, dangers to life and property and various other calamities were quickly averted, so also many a distracted mind was restored to perfect equilibrium in no time.

3rdly. Although Sai Baba has cast off his material body, his response to his devotees is just the same as it was when Sai Baba was a living entity.

There are admittedly wonders or miracles which can only be worked or shown by a Divine Entity, that is, an Entity whose Self-Realisation had been to perfect that he had completely merged himself in the "Atman" pervading the entire universe.

Therefore, what Bhakta of Sai Baba is there who will not find it a heavenly bliss to sing the songs of this Saint of Saints, the Sai Baba?

Sai Pradhan Baug,

Santa Cruz

25th December 1932

MORESHWAR W. PRADHAN

APPENDIX I

In the ordinary run, it has been observed that persons who had attained in their life-time the status of a saint have been succeeded by one of their disciples on what used to be considered the "Gadi" of such a self-made saint. In some cases, it is the saint that names his successor, and if no such is named, then if the generality of disciples so deemed it, they selected someone from amongst themselves and thus kept up the lineage of such an original saint.

But in cases where the original saint had been repeatedly realised by innumerable Bhaktas or followers to be a de facto incarnation of God, i.e. one who had been completely merged in the Atran "Self", no such successor happened to be proposed or installed e.g. Buddha, Zoroaster, Mohamed, Christ, Tukaram, etc. In the present generation, Shri Sai Baba had been one who had been completely merged in the Atma, i.e. "The Universal Self" and, therefore, never worried himself to name anyone from amongst his devotees to be his successor:—

An extract from the report No. C. W.—5 of 1918 of the Mamlatdar and Magistrate of Kopergaon dated 19-10-1918 to the Collector and District Magistrate of Ahmednagar—"The only course open was, therefore, to take charge of the property, pending the framing of any proper and responsible committee for management as no "Will" was left by Sai Baba, and any disciple named and appointed.." verifies the above.

And this (non-appointment of a successor) was for very good reasons too.

Sai Baba was one of those Saint of Saints whose mission in life had been to place everyone of his disciples

or devotees on the high road of **being** and **becoming** one like Sai Baba himself; as a matter of fact, everyone who had become genuinely attached to Sai Baba used to feel in the heart of his heart that he alone of all the disciples was the most favourite. Such had been the initial stage of such an attached Bhaktas of Sai Baba, but when this initial stage had gone by and the Bhakta was getting nearer and nearer his "self" he could not but be convinced of the perfect Divinity of Sai Baba, and Sai Baba's wisdom in not naming any particular devotee of his as his successor.

Very significant symptoms of non-attachment and complete renunciation of the world including his own physical body are daily catching the eyes of careful observers in the case of one Bhawoo Kumbhar (a potter) of Shirdi (died in 1938).

Unlike many an impostor, and precisely like Sai Baba, this Bhawoo Kumbhar does not countenance any public advertisement, and has a natural abhorrence for amassing any wealth or property save a bare loin cloth, thereby giving the clearest proof of his closest proximity to Sai Baba i.e. his own "Self".

So far from imitating Sai Baba and his godly career, even the austerity as it is manifest at present of a man like Bhawoo Kumbhar cannot be imitated by any impostors however happily circumstanced they may find themselves to be, as a result of their exploiting, under a saintly garb, the blind devotion of the gullible masses of humanity who are being attached towards Shirdi by merely listening to or hearing of the history of Sai Baba-available meagrely as it is at present.

Sai Pradhan Baug,	}	MORESHWAR W. PRADHAN.
Santa Cruz,		
25th December, 1932.		

APPENDIX II

Shirdi Sansthan of Shri Sai Baba

Preamble of the Rules in force since 1-10-41

His Holiness Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, known to be a Saint of All India fame, but of unknown origin, came about 85 years ago to Shirdi, a small village abutting on the Agra Trunk Road, about 8 miles south of the town of Kopargaon in the Ahmednagar District, and day by day being found to be a person of great sanctity, happened to be worshipped by Hindus as well as non-Hindus. On the 15th of October 1918, Tuesday, Vijaya Dashmi saha (सह) Eakadashi, Shaka 1840, he died intestate and his remains pursuant to his wish (which was held in reverence by all the villagers as well as his Bhaktas) were buried in the Stately Wada, which was then nearing completion and which the late Shrimant Gopalrao Mukund Buti, a millionaire of Nagpur, had built with the consent of His Holiness. As His Holiness had a large number of devotees, His Shrine was going to be a permanent Institutions of worship by people of all classes, and it was, therefore, deemed necessary to have a body to manage the same. A committee was formed to continue the worship of the deceased as a Saint. The formal committee consisted (besides Shrimant G. M. Buti, who had practically throughout resided in Shirdi and at times in Nasik and Bombay, Santa Cruz, where he died in 1921), almost entirely of the Bombay side, viz. Hari Sitaram (Bhausahab alias Kakasaheb) Dikshit, G. R. (alias Annasaheb) Dabholkar, Moreswar W. Pradhan (now Rao Bahadur), L. G. (alias Kaka) Mahajani, Prof. G. G. Narke, R. A. Turkhud (Babasaheb), Taty Ganpat Patil Kote, N. G. (alias Nanasaheb) Chandorkar (of Kalyan), Annasaheb Chinchnikar, N. M. Thosar (now a Sannyasi),

Mrs. Saraswatibai R. Tendulkar, R. B. Purandare, Atmaram (Stamp Vendor,) Yeshwantrao J. Galvankar (now Rao Saheb), Vasantryao Narayan Gorakshkar, S. B. Dhumal (afterwards Rao Bahadur), B. V. Deo (Balasaheb), D. V. Sambhare and many others. Das Ganoo Maharaj by his hundreds of Kirtans, both in Bombay, its suburbs and outside Bombay, greatly helped this Committee by enlightening the general public about Sai Baba's Saintly Entity since 1910, and is doing so upto date. This Committee started from the Bhandara day i.e. 27th October 1918 at Shirdi a Fund (then called "Shri Samarth Sainath Kothi" for continuing the worship in the Mandir, Musjid, Chavdi &c., as in the life-time of Sai Baba), which is now called the Kayam (Permanent) Fund, and, by the grace of Sai Baba, it has up-to-date risen to half a lakh, and is steadily growing. The gradual addition of several locally valuable (if not indispensable) Properties e.g. the renovated Navalkar Wada &c. and the steady developments of the Samadhi Mandir, the Dwarkamai, the Chavdi, and the Lendi Garden do stand to the credit of the Shirdi Sansthan of Shri Sai Baba, as well as the selfless donors. As Sai Baba had died intestate, His property was taken charge of by the Mamlatdar of Kopergaon under sec. 57 of the District Police Act, and the Committee formed was referred to the District Judge to whom the District Magistrate had under section 58 of the said Act reported the case. In suit No. 135 of 1921, filed by the Committee in the District Court of Ahmednagar, the District Judge sanctioned under section 92 of the Code of Civil Procedure, a scheme for the administration of the Shirdi Sansthan of Shri Sai Baba, which was accordingly formed.

APPENDIX III

JOURNEY TO SHIRDI

A devotee or pilgrim may travel to Shirdi, either via Bombay or Poona. If he chooses to travel from Bombay or from the North, he will have to get down at Manmad Junction, C. R., change the line and catch the train running from Manmad to Kopargaon on Dhond-Manmad Railway. Those coming from southern India will have to change at Dhond and proceed further up by the Dhond-Manmad Railway to Kopargaon.

From Kopargaon Station to Kopargaon Town—a distance of three miles—Tongas are available. From Kopargaon Station to Shirdi—a distance of eight miles—bus service in addition to Tongas is available.

Shirdi village abuts on the Main Road, from where Sai Baba's temple is about 70 or 80 yards.

Sai Pradhan Baug,
Santa Cruz,
August 1943.

MORESHWAR W. PRADHAN

Not :—Since this was written the transport facilities have greatly increased. There are now direct S. T. buses from Bombay, Poona, Manmad and Nasik. There is also a bus service from Kopargaon Railway Station to Shirdi. Tongas are now out of date.
Receiver.

An Appeal TO THE TOURIST OF THE WEST

Dear Reader,

After perusing this little brochure, you will naturally be asking the following questions:—

1. How is it, that, coming all the way from Europe and America, we do not come across such personages in India?

The reply is, that, you do not come with a mind in search after Self-Realisation. You merely visit India for sight-seeing with perhaps a vague idea of meeting a Faquir performing the ropetrick, a trick which these Saints would never condescend to manifest.

2. What good have these Saints done to India?

The reply is patent. Just think why the Indian is living, when all the mighty Empires of the world, such as those of Rome, Greece, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and recently of Spain and Portugal, with all their vaunted splendours and civilizations, have collapsed or disappeared altogether.

The Indian is existing, because he is full of that vital spirituality which was inculcated in him by his immortal saints, thousands of years ago.

Invasions have come and gone. These have had very little effect on his inherent spirituality which, it has been the constant endeavour of these Divine Personages to preserve, foster and nurture.

The Western Tourist will find a diversity of so-called religious practices in India, and thus feel bewildered. But scratch an Indian, and though he may be a touchable or an untouchable Hindu, a Brahmo, a Mahomedan, a Parsee, a Christian, or an aboriginal, you will find him imbued with the same essential deep faith, as mentioned above. All his outward forms, practices, and rituals are of a secondary and preparatory nature.

1. Vide the following:—

- (a) The Bhagwat Gita, Verses 55-61, Chapter 2. Translation in English by Mrs. Annie Besant.
- (b) The Master as I Saw Him, and Aggressive Hinduism, by Sister Nivedita.
- (c) The life of Shri Ramkrishna Paramahansa.
- (d) The life and works of Swami Vivekananda and his brother Swamis.
- (e) The works of Sister Devamata.

Dear Reader, if you are sincerely inclined to study this question with a deep spiritual motive, you cannot do better than read carefully, the article on the Saints and Prophets of Maharashtra, pages 142-172, Vol. I, in the Rise of the Mahratta Power, by the late Hon. Justice M. G. Ranade, M.A., LL.B., C.I.E., a luminary of the Bombay High Court.

An extract from page 167 will go to show how the whole of this article is worth a careful study:—

“We may believe the miracles ascribed to those Saints or disbelieve them but we cannot disbelieve their emphatic statements on this point. All the love, that, in Christian lands, circles round the life and death of Jesus Christ has been in India freely poured upon the intense realisation

of the every day presence of the Supreme God in the heart, in a way more convincing than eyes and ears and sense of touch can realise. This constitutes the glory of the Saints, and it is a possession which is treasured up by our people high and low, men and women, as a solace in life, beyond all value".

Dear Reader! This is why the Indian has lived, is living and will continue to live, inspite of all the cataclysmic vicissitudes of Human Existence.

Distances are rapidly foreclosing. The East and the West have already met in a number of ways. And just as the Indian has to pick up some of the material advances of the West, the West has to grasp the salient points on Indian spirituality for the advancement and preservation of the Human Race.

Jer Mansion,
Bandra,
11th February, 1933.

Ever yours,
R. A. TURKHUD.